

## CHARIVARIA.

"It is expected that the wedding of Lord CHELSEA and Miss MARIE COXON will take place before the Coronation." This will be a relief to the Coronation Committee, who had feared that the events might clash.

"*Liberal Opinion*" has been mulcted in Liberal damages, and yet it is not pleased.

The question whether Ulster is arming or not is still being discussed by some of our newspapers. All we can say is that an ulster without arms would be a fairly useless article.

"Mr. ZEE, the new Chinese Attaché, has arrived in London." It is, we believe, an open secret that he may be elected an honorary member of the Society of Somersetshire Men.

In regard to the Flushing fortification project the official view of the German Foreign Office is stated to be that, as a Sovereign Power, Holland has the right to do as she pleases in her own territory. It will be a rare joke if Holland takes advantage of this permission.

We have before aluded to the way in which the candour of some newspaper placards stultifies the reticence of others. There is always at least one blackleg among them. We were anxious, the other day, to know the issue of a certain slander case. We saw "RESULT" on a contents bill, and put our hand in our pocket. Then we remarked another bill:—

"RESULT  
DAMAGES."

We still hesitated—until a third placard caught our eye:—

"RESULT  
HEAVY DAMAGES."

This was all we wanted to know, and we retained our coin.

"The sardines which left the coast of Brittany," a telegram tells us, "have

been found in large numbers off the coast of Morocco." One day, perhaps, the thrilling story of this escapade will be told in full, showing how, tired of the constant attacks made on them, the little fish one night, under cover of darkness, when the Bretons were sleeping, stole away, swam silently without a stop to the Mediterranean, there lived for some time a life of ease and luxury within touch of the African

GALTON was the inventor of the system of identification by finger-prints. It is good to know that what was considered by a certain section of His MAJESTY's subjects to be an ugly blemish on an otherwise useful career has now been removed.

A Local Government Board enquiry has been held at Wolverhampton to decide what shall be done with the South

Staffordshire Smallpox Hospital, which was erected six years ago at a cost of £18,000, and has not had a single patient. It is thought that a strong appeal to local patriotism will be recommended, calling upon public-spirited residents to acquire the requisite disease within a stated period.

A stag which was uncartered preparatory to a run with Lord ROTHSCHILD's Stag-hounds, the other day, near Leighton Buzzard, got on the railway line and was killed by an express train almost at once. Now that the superiority of express trains over stag-hounds has been demonstrated, it is thought that the former will be exclusively employed in the future by wealthy hunting-men.

From *The Daily Mail* Fashion Page:—

"NOVELTY OF THE  
WEEK.

*Charms for Coronation  
Year Bridesmaids."*

The insinuation that the bridesmaids of this year are lacking in charms has caused no little pain in some quarters.

An oculist, interviewed by *The Mirror*, has been recommending one to roll one's eyes round and round as a means of strengthening the vision. The only difficulty, we imagine, is taking the eye out and putting it back again, but no doubt this only requires a little practice.

Aviation in this country has received a serious set-back. Damages were awarded last week to a gentleman who was injured at the Star and Garter Hotel, Kew Bridge, by a flying cork.



*The Critic.* "MY DEAR, JUST FANCY HAVING YOUR PORTRAIT PAINTED IN YOUR CAR. WHY, A MOTOR-CAR GOES OUT OF FASHION IN A SINGLE YEAR!"

Riviera, ultimately to be discovered and harried once more.

Mlle. MARTHE STEINHEIL, it is reported from Paris, has taken the veil, and become a Carmelite nun. This has caused a considerable amount of quiet gratification at Carmelite House, where it is taken as a compliment to the admirable way in which the sensational case was reported in *The Daily Mail*.

It is denied that the late Sir FRANCIS

## THOUGHTS ON THE COMING CENSUS.

[Due April 2, 1911.]

ARAMINTA, ere the statistician  
Comes to take his census-toll,  
And, behaving like the Inquisition,  
Bids you bare your secret soul,  
Let me now, two months before the day, seize  
Such a chance to air my gift for gag;  
Let me write at once *Eheu fugaces!*  
Ere the pens begin to wag  
Of my rivals busy working off the old Horatian tag.

Envious Time, that often likes to print a  
Crow's-foot on the ageing cheek,  
Favours your façade, my Araminta,  
Leaves it superfinely sleek;  
Yes, the years for you have been soft-handed,  
Still—for moments fly (this must be so)—  
You are not the same young thing, so candid,  
Who, but just ten springs ago,  
Lightly told the fact-collector every word he wished  
to know.

Twenty-one you were and un-selfconscious,  
As became the prime of youth,  
Never nursed a doubt, like PILATE (PONTIUS),  
On the attributes of Truth;  
But with riper years I shouldn't wonder  
If, in drawing up this next report,  
On the point of age you made a blunder  
Of a not unusual sort;  
No, it wouldn't greatly shock me if you got the total  
short.

I have noticed, when they reach the stages  
Where conjecture serves for guide,  
Women, if they err about their ages,  
Err upon the *minus* side;  
Thus, when April rounds the decade's circuit  
And you do the little sum that 's set  
(10 + 21), I think you'll work it  
Out at 27, net;  
27 is the answer which I seem to see you get.

And with every ten years, as they flow on,  
You will add a lessening few  
To your summers—five and four and so on,  
Sticking fast at forty-two;  
There in future, permanently dated,  
You'll defy the periodic quest,  
Till in due course by the gods translated  
To the Islands of the Blest,  
Where the decades cease from troubling and the  
queries are at rest. O. S.

## A PHOTOGRAPHER'S POST-BAG.

["—, the photographer, of —, having purchased an aeroplane, is desirous of placing same at the disposal of budding airmen, who may be photographed on it. Passenger flights can also be arranged."  
—Morning Post.

THE following correspondence is anticipated as an outcome of the above advertisement:—

LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON begs to inform Mr. — that he will be very glad to sit for his portrait, if a suitably caparisoned elephant, with competent mahout, can be in attendance next Friday afternoon at 2.30 p.m. Lord CURZON OF KEDLESTON has little doubt that the enterprise

shown by Mr. — in consulting the taste of his aeronautic *clientèle* will enable him to provide a proper *mise-en-scène* on the present occasion. In case there is any difficulty, however, Lord CURZON OF KEDLESTON suggests that Mr. — should approach the authorities at the Zoological Gardens, stating the purpose for which the elephant will be required.

DEAR SIR,—I am instructed by the HOME SECRETARY to inform you that if you can furnish convincing guarantees that the men who will take part in your realistic group, "Winston the Conqueror," are genuine and desperate anarchists, he will be very glad to give you a sitting next Monday morning.

Faithfully yours,

E. H. MARSH.

Home Office.

DEAR SIR,—I am anxious to celebrate the impending twenty-fifth anniversary of the appearance of my monumental monograph on the Mammoth and the Flood. With a view to placing on record this interesting event in a suitably pictorial manner, my friend, the Editor of *The Times*—to whose journal I have contributed more than 10,000 columns of correspondence—has suggested that I should be photographed with him and a specimen of the gigantic but unhappily extinct quadruped mentioned above. I should be glad if you could arrange to procure either a skeleton or a good "reconstitution" of one of the mummies discovered in the frozen tundras of Northern Siberia [Here a column and a half of interesting matter dealing with the Flood, Mr. Cobden and other cognate subjects is unavoidably omitted] and let us know on what day and at what hour it would suit you for myself and the Editor of *The Times* to attend. I propose to appear in costume suitable to the geographical *habitat* of the *Elephas primigenius*, i.e. a long walrus-hide coat with stereognathous leggings and sandals of mercerized mink. The Editor of *The Times* will *probably* appear as a hunter or trapper with a kinkajou cape, a waistcoat of striped bandicoot, and Turkish trousers of padded wolverene, with tigerskin spats and Boston rubbers.

Faithfully yours, H. H. HOWORTH.

Mastodon Mansions.

DEAR SIR,—Seeing that you make a speciality of realistic surroundings, I beg to call your attention to the fact that I am prepared to let you have, at most reasonable terms, first-rate massive family vault, never used owing to bankruptcy of the gentleman who ordered it. Would make a superb background to full-length portrait of Mr. ALGERNON ASHTON.

Yours faithfully, MORTLE BROS.

Euston Road.

MR. WILLIAM LE QUEUX presents his compliments to Mr. — and regrets that he is unable to avail himself of Mr. —'s offer. His position renders it undesirable that he should be photographed in the entourage of any but a reigning or *de facto* sovereign.

DEAR SIR,—As I have been pressed by a great many of my readers to prefix my portrait to my next volume of poems, "The Ecstasy of Effusion," I should be obliged if you could let me know whether you possess amongst your scenic outfit such a thing as a genuine college window, at which you could pose me in a suitably introspective attitude. Believe me to be,

Faithfully yours, A. C. BENSON.

Magdalene College, Cambridge.

DEAR SIR,—Please expect me at 10 sharp to-morrow, with my *fiancé*. Yours winningly, ZENA DARE.



### A PROUD PARENT.

NEPTUNE. "SHIP AHOY! WHAT SHIP'S THAT?"

FATHER THAMES. "THUNDERER. LITTLE THING OF MY OWN."

[H.M.S. *Thunderer*, the first *Dreadnought* built on the Thames, is to be launched from the Thames Ironworks on February 1.]



## THE BUTLER SCANDALISES.

[Being a specimen of the new Society journalism for American consumption. See "Householder's" recent letter to *The Times*.]

DEAR MADAM,—I take up my pen to give you another batch of good gossip for our lively cousins on the other side of the Great Pond to repeat to each other through their nasal organs over their pie and gum, which are, I understand, their national provender, washed down with cocktails and iced water. To one who, like myself, prefers his meals beefy and regular, it is a problem how the Americans live at all; but however short their lives may be they tip merrily and brightly while they last. Which reminds me, dear Madam, that I have not yet received any remuneration for my last letter. Times under the present Government being so hard, I must request a speedy remittance.

My principal item of news comes from a scrupulously untainted source—no less a person than Sir Elihu Crusher's own valet having given it to me. Sir Elihu, it seems, recently opened a new branch at Chelmsford, and who do you think was the first customer? Lady Wirridge's French maid, for a shilling's-worth of rat poison. When I tell you that Lord Wirridge has since been very ill and that the French maid has disappeared, you will no doubt draw such conclusions as America requires.

You know, of course, that LORD GEORGE SANGER gave up the circus business some few years since. I have it on the best authority that his Lordship cannot feel comfortable at night or get good repose without a Teddy bear on the counterpane at the foot of the bed. His Lordship has recently been visited by Sir JOSEPH LYONS, and this, too, has reminded him pleasantly of old times.

The latest news of Sir JOHN BARKER, of Kensington, is that his establishment was visited recently by the Duchess of Sunderland under the impression that it was Harrod's Stores, but she stayed there and made a number of purchases, including a Virginia ham. I had this from a friend of mine in the Packing department, and can vouch for it.

Perhaps a few facts concerning gratuities (or *honoraria*) might yield material for one of your spicy and highly-paid articles. The Earl of Rosherville gives butlers ten shillings and footmen five; keepers a sovereign. The largest present I ever received was a fiver from the late Marquis of Clacton, but its value was depreciated by his borrowing ten pounds from me



## THE STAY-AS-YOU-PLEASE CINEMA PALACE.

Boy (to Lady just arrived). "PLEASE, WILL YOU TELL ME THE TIME, LADY!"

Lady. "HALF-PAST ELEVEN."

Boy. "WILL YOU PLEASE TELL ME WHEN IT'S SIX O'CLOCK, LADY, COS I'VE GOT TO GO OUT AND SELL PAPERS!"

the next day and never paying it back. The readiness with which the young and more spirited nobility will extract loans from men-servants is not the least of the blots on the peerage.

In conclusion, dear Madam, let me say that I have three friends all most advantageously placed to hear interesting things—a chambermaid at the Walrus, a waiter at the Mermaid Restaurant, and a page at the National Radical Club; but they refuse to divulge without a little encouragement. I must therefore again request you to forward me something, if only a trifle, on

account. My experience is that no palm is properly open until it is oiled.

Believe me, dear Madam,

Your obedient Servant, —

From a letter in *The Guardian* :—

"I wonder whether Mrs. Shearme has met with the description in Herodotus of the excessive hardness of the skulls of the Egyptians, and their immunity from sunstroke because they cause their children from earliest infancy to meet the elements bareheaded."

HERODOTUS might have gone on to give bachelors some idea of the precautions they should adopt.

## THE NOVEL OF THE FUTURE.

"Now, Miss Barlock," I said to my typist, as I entered my writing den, "if you're quite ready we'll begin at once, please. Title: *THE SYNTHETIC PILGRIM; a Post-Impressionist Romance*. Have you got that?" Miss Barlock had got that, but she looked puzzled, and, as she seems to take an intelligent interest in my work, I thought it better to explain the idea before proceeding. "It's like this," I said; "we are assured by competent authorities that, in spite of the warnings of Sir WILLIAM RICHMOND, Sir ALFRED EAST, Mr. SARGENT and others, all the Art Students now at the Academy will within the next ten years have become Post-Impressionists. That is, they will set down their impressions of Nature with the technique of a very young child whose powers of observation have not had time to become paralysed by any instruction in drawing. Well, Literature, being so closely allied to Art, is quite certain to be affected sooner or later by the new Movement. It will throw off the shackles of style and composition, and be primitive and go-as-you-please. I'm going to be the Pioneer of Post-Impressionist Fiction. You see what I'm trying for, don't you? Very well, then. Chapter One. *The Hero, and how he became a Pilgrim* :—

"He was quite a simple ordinary kind of man. His outlines were hard and black. He had a small, roundish head with three dots in it, one above the other. His body was triangular, and all down it was a row of little circles. These were his buttons. His arms were straight and quite thin. They ended in three prongs like toasting-forks. It was the same with his legs. . . ."

I noticed a slight elevation in Miss Barlock's eyebrows at this point. "It's all right, Miss Barlock," I assured her. "I am merely adopting the method by which an unsophisticated mind invariably represents the human form. Probably that is the shape in which *all* of us would see it if our vision had not been warped by civilisation, or tradition, or something. Anyhow, no one ever yet failed to recognise that it was a man. And an author may devote pages and pages to description and analysis of his hero and never even get as far as *that*. Why, for instance, should I tell the reader that my Man had long nervous muscular fingers when these simple tridents amply suffice to express the handiness of his hands and the footiness of his feet? . . . You don't know? No more do I—so let us get on.

"He lived in a really and truly artistic house. It was an irregular parallelogram, and the roof was bright pink. The door and windows were stuck in anyhow, and there were little corkscrew-things coming out of the chimneys. These were the smoke. There were trees about. Not any particular trees, because I don't know one tree from another and couldn't bother to describe them if I did. Just trees—with bright blue and green and chocolate foliage like the loveliest woolwork. There was a bow-wow outside the house, and inside it a fat cat sat on a mat. But at last the hero got tired of living there, so he called for his gee-gee. Gug-gug. . . . Yes, Miss Barlock, I did mean that to be typed. You see, I'm taking the point of view of an infant of very tender years, who at this stage of the narrative would inevitably make that remark. It gives the necessary note of *naïveté*, and I shouldn't wonder myself if there were a deep and subtle meaning in it somewhere. So down it goes. . . . Chapter Two. *About His Gee-gee* :—Unless you were told you would not have known it for a gee-gee at all. It was the sort of gee-gee you see when it is a long way off and you are rather short-sighted. But it was a gee-gee right enough. It had all the essentials of gee-gee-iness. If it hadn't, our hero

wouldn't have been seen with it. And so he said good-bye to his bow-wow and the fat cat, which couldn't be seen because it was inside the house, and he got on his gee-gee and his travels began. Goo-goo."

"I insist on having that 'goo-goo' typed, Miss Barlock," I told her. "It's part of my technique. You are merely one of the Public, so you mustn't try to dictate to me how I should express my temperament. Besides, I'm dictating to you . . . Chapter Three. *His Adventures among Masterpieces* :—

"Well, and so he rode and he rode, till at last he came to a country which was entirely composed of little prismatic smuts, so that you couldn't make out what it was like unless you went ever such a distance off, and then it was disappointing. So he didn't stay there very long. And the smuts did not suit his gee-gee at all. So on they went to the next place, and there the sky was all neatly paved with small slabs of paint, and the inhabitants were all completely out of drawing and perspective, and had no anatomical nonsense about them. But the gee-gee wasn't very well even there. . . ."

Here Miss Barlock ventured the criticism that, so far, my novel did not appear to have much plot. "It has none whatever," I said, with some pride, "and it's not going to have. I'm depicting Life as I've observed it. Have I detected any kind of plot governing my own or others' experiences? I have not. Then why, I ask you, Miss Barlock, should I undertake the mental labour of inventing one? No, no, let us be true to Nature as we happen to see it. . . . Chapter Four. *His Further Adventures* :—

"So he got on his gee-gee again, and he rode and he rode and he rode. And soon he came to a land where there were huts and palm-trees and things, and all the natives were brown and quite flat, exactly like people made of gingerbread. Only they were not so nice to eat. So the gee-gee was very sick indeed. Gug-gug. Goo-goo-goo. . . ."

Miss Barlock glanced up at me over her typewriter with some anxiety. "Are you quite sure," she inquired uneasily, "that this sort of thing will be really popular?"

"Not immediately," I admitted. "Every inventor of a new literary style has to go through a period of misunderstanding, and even derision. Look at CARLYLE and BROWNING and MEREDITH, for example!"

"But surely," she objected, "that isn't quite the same thing. I mean, they didn't write like *babies*—'gug-gugging' and 'goo-goo-ing,' and all that."

No doubt Miss Barlock didn't mean to do it, but somehow she put me off. I have made no further progress with my great Post-Impressionist Novel. But it is merely biding its time.

F. A.

## Commercial Candour.

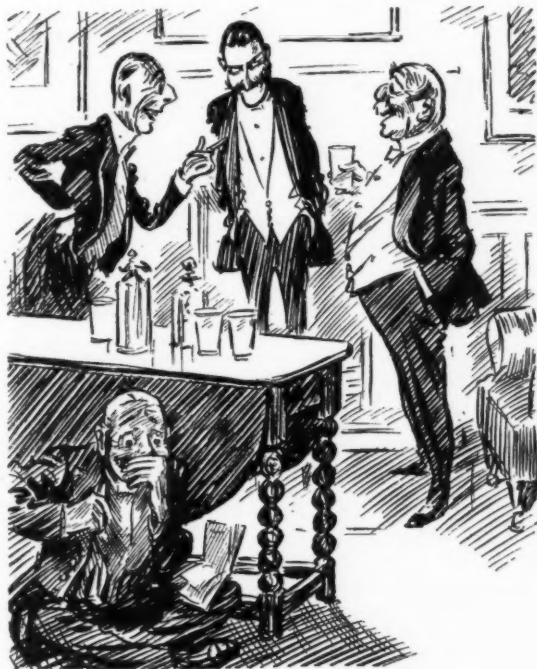
"It would seem possible that almost any woman, no matter what the extent or depth of her wrinkles, might have been removed entirely and for ever by means of this lucky discovery."—*Add.*

"'Women's Friendships' forms the subject of an article in the February number of 'The Quiver,' written by Dr. Elizabeth Sloan Chesser. A description of the foreign churches in London, illustrated by photographs, throws a light on this subject."—*Publishers' Circular*. Not a searchlight, of course, nor the fierce kind that beats upon a throne; but just a few candle-power—a sort of dim religious light.

"Mr. — is too well-known locally to begin expatiating at any length upon his vocal excellencies."—*Ilkley Gazette*. The writer shows a wise caution.

## JOURNALISM IN THE COUNTRY HOUSE.

SEE *THE TIMES* ON THE RECENT REVELATIONS OF THE WAY IN WHICH SCANDAL ABOUT ENGLISH SOCIETY GETS INTO THE AMERICAN PRESS THROUGH INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY SERVANTS.



THE SECOND FOOTMAN NEARLY GIVES HIMSELF AWAY WHILE GETTING MATERIAL FOR HIS COLUMN IN *THE MILWAUKEE SPICK-BOX*.



THE BOOT BOY GETS EXCLUSIVE INFORMATION FOR HIS WEEKLY LETTER TO *THE CHICAGO EAVESDROPPER*.



WHILE THE ARRIVAL OF THE NOTORIOUS LADY X. DISORGANISES THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD.

## LITTLE PLAYS FOR AMATEURS.

## III.—"MISS PRENDERGAST."

As the curtain goes up two ladies are discovered in the morning-room of Honeysuckle Lodge engaged in work of a feminine nature. Miss Alice Prendergast is doing something delicate with a crochet-hook, but it is obvious that her thoughts are far away. She sighs at intervals, and occasionally lays down her work and presses both hands to her heart. A sympathetic audience will have no difficulty in guessing that she is in love. On the other hand, her elder sister, Miss Prendergast, is completely wrapped up in a sock for one of the poorer classes, over which she frowns formidably. The sock, however, has no real bearing upon the plot, and she must not make too much of it.

Alice (hiding her emotions). Did you have a pleasant dinner-party last night, Jane?

Jane (to herself). Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty. (Looking up.) Very pleasant indeed, Alice. The Blizzards were there, and the Podbys, and the Slumphs. (These people are not important and should not be over-emphasised.) Mrs. Podby's maid has given notice.

Alice. Who took you in?

Jane (brightening up). Such an interesting man, my dear. He talked most agreeably about Art during dinner, and we renewed the conversation in the drawing-room. We found that we agreed upon all the main principles of Art, considered as such.

Alice (with a look in her eyes which shows that she is recalling a tender memory). When I was in Shropshire last week—What was your man's name?

Jane (with a warning glance at the audience). You know how difficult it is to catch names when one is introduced. I am certain he never heard mine. (As the plot depends partly upon this, she pauses for it to sink in.) But I enquired about him afterwards, and I find that he is a Mr.—

Enter Mary, the parlourmaid.

Mary (handing letter). A letter for you, Miss.

Jane (taking it). Thank you, Mary. (Exit Mary to work up her next line.) A letter! I wonder who it is from! (Reading the envelope.) "Miss Prendergast, Honeysuckle Lodge." (She opens it with the air of one who has often

received letters before, but feels that this one may play an important part in her life.) "Dear Miss Prendergast, I hope you will pardon the presumption of what I am about to write to you, but whether you pardon me or not I ask you to listen to me. I know of no woman for whose talents I have a greater admiration, or for whose qualities I have a more sincere affection than yourself. Since I have known you, you have been the lodestar of my existence, the fountain of my inspiration. I feel that, were your life joined to mine, the joint path upon which we trod would be the path to happiness, such as I

Jane (rather pleased with herself). Well, really—I—this is—Mr. Bootle! Fancy!

Alice (starting up). Was that a ring? (She frowns at the prompter and a bell is heard to ring.) It is Mr. Bootle! I know his ring, I mean I know—Dear, I think I will go and lie down. I have a headache.

[She looks miserably at the audience, closes her eyes, and goes off with her handkerchief to her mouth, taking care not to fall over the furniture.]

Enter Mary, followed by James Bootle.

Mary. Mr. Bootle. (Exit finally.)

Jane. Good morning, Mr. Bootle!

Bootle. I beg—I thought—Why, of course! It's Miss—er—h'm, yes—How do you do? Did you get back safely last night?

Jane. Yes, thank you. (Coyly) I got your letter.

Bootle. My letter? (Sees his letter on the table. Furiously.) You opened my letter!

Jane (mistaking his fury for passion). Yes—James. And (looking down on the ground) the answer is "Yes."

Bootle (realising the situation). By George! (Aside) I have proposed to the wrong lady! Tchek!

Jane. You may kiss me, James.

Bootle. Have you a sister?

Jane (missing the connection). Yes, I have a younger sister, Alice. (Coldly.) But I hardly see—

Bootle (beginning to understand how he made the mistake). A younger sister! Then you are Miss Prendergast? And my letter—Ah!

Enter Alice.

Alice. You are wanted, Jane, a moment.

Jane. Will you excuse me, Mr. Bootle? (Exit.)

Bootle (to Alice, as she follows her sister out). Don't go!

Alice (wanly—if she knows how). Am I to stay and congratulate you?

Bootle. Alice! (They approach the footlights, while Jane, having finished her business, comes in unobserved and watches from the back.) It is all a mistake! I didn't know your Christian name—I didn't know you had a sister. The letter I addressed to Miss Prendergast I meant for Miss Alice Prendergast.

Alice. James! My love! But what can we do?



"'ERE Y'ARE, GENTS, NOW'S YER CHAWNCE, THE GRITE PRONOUNCIN' DICSHUNRY."

have as yet hardly dared to dream of. In short, dear Miss Prendergast, I ask you to marry me, and I will come in person for my answer. Yours truly—" (In a voice of intense surprise) "Jas. Bootle!"

[At the word "Bootle" a wave of warm colour rushes over Alice and dyes her from neck to brow. If she is not an actress of sufficient calibre to ensure this, she must do the best she can by starting abruptly and putting her hand to her throat.]

Alice (aside, in a choking voice). Mr. Bootle! In love with Jane!

Jane. My dear! The man who took me down to dinner! Well!

Alice (picking up her work again and trying to be calm). What will you say?



*Poetic Lady.* "AH, SIR CHARLES, WHEN YOU SEE YOUR WIFE LOOKING SO BEAUTIFUL IN HER EXQUISITE FURS, DON'T YOU REPEAT TO YOURSELF THOSE CHARMING LINES——"

*Crusty Fox-hunter (cutting in).* "WHAT I REPEAT TO MYSELF IS, 'A HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVEN POUND TEN AND NO SECOND HORSE!'"

*Bootle (gloomily).* Nothing. As a man of honour I cannot withdraw. So two lives are ruined!

*Alice.* You are right, James. Jane must never know. Good-bye!

[*They give each other a farewell embrace.*]

*Jane (aside).* They love. (*Fiercely*) But he is mine; I will hold him to his promise! (*Picking up a photograph of Alice as a small child from an occasional table.*) Little Alice! And I promised to take care of her—to protect her from the cruel world. Baby Alice! (*She puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*) No! I will not spoil two lives! (*Aloud*) Why 'Good-bye,' Alice?

[*Bootle and Alice, who have been embracing all this time—unless they can think of something else to do—break away in surprise.*]

*Alice.* Jane—we—I—

*Jane (calmly).* Dear Alice! I understand perfectly. Mr. Bootle said in his letter to you that he was coming for his answer, and I see what answer you have given him. (*To Bootle*) You

remember I told you it would be Yes. I know my little sister, you see.

*Bootle (tactlessly).* But—you told me I could kiss you!

*Jane (smiling).* And I tell you again now. I believe it is usual for men to kiss their sisters-in-law? (*She offers her cheek. Bootle, whose day it is, salutes her respectfully.*) And now (*gaily*), perhaps I had better leave you young people alone!

[*Exit, with a backward look at the audience expressive of the fact that she has been wearing the mask.*]

*Bootle.* Alice, then you are mine, after all!

*Alice.* James! (*They kiss—No, perhaps better not. There has been quite enough for one evening.*) And to think that she knew all the time! Now I am quite, quite happy. And James—you will remember in future that I am Miss Alice Prendergast?

*Bootle (gaily).* My dear, I shall only be able to remember that you are The Future Mrs. Bootle!

CURTAIN. A. A. M.

"We hope Mr. Atkinson will keep his word, and with the ability which he has always shewn, tear to shreds and tatters the subterranean methods of the clique which at present rides the high horse."—*Wharfedale and Airedale Observer.*

This, we foresee, will be one of the events of the coronation year.

Judge WILLIS, as reported in *The Evening News* :—

"I don't want to detract from the great works of Browning but I never got any great advantage from reading his works."

Judge WILLIS may be at ease. He has not detracted from them.

"The exceptional wealth of fauna possessed by sunny Italy is ransacked for this floral carpet with striking results."—*Sunday Circle.*

The famous centre-square, made of buttercups and tigers, should be noted particularly.

"SAFE, Milner; suit tradesman; 60s.; drilling machine, 70s."—*Advt. in "Daily Express."*

The drilling machine should have been offered afterwards—to somebody else.



*Small Boy (to friend).* "I SAY, HAROLD, DO GIVE MY MOTHER A TURN, SHE'S NOT HAVING MUCH OF AN EVENING."

### TO A HAIRPIN.

O PIN that didst of yore constrain  
Some lady's would-be wanton mane  
With dear enslavement,  
Till wind or luck, rude autocrat,  
Expelled thee from that maiden's mat  
On to the pavement.

What story hast thou? Was the head  
Thou tired'st hazel, black or red,  
Gold or peroxide?  
Had it a parting? Did it wave?  
Was it in mode demure and suave,  
Or on the shock side?

Didst thou, with hidden guile, attach  
Some cunning tresses bought "to match,"  
To hide a lacking?  
We can but trust, if that be so,  
The hair hung on, despite the blow  
That sent thee packing.

Ah me! No doubt a deal of care  
Was spent to bring that head of hair  
To full perfection;  
We wonder if, for all her toil,  
Thy tragedy went far to spoil  
The whole erection.

It may be; for that man, indeed,  
Who begs, to serve his direst need,  
A pin—a hair one—  
To clean his pipe, is ever met  
With hackneyed statements of regret  
That "she can't spare one."

He may not doubt. Yet, truth to say,  
Judged by the free and casual way  
These maidens scatter—  
E'en as his quills the porcupine—  
Their pins abroad, this fall of thine  
Should hardly matter.

O hairpin cast upon the earth,  
'Tis not for man to ask thy worth  
Or probe thy history;  
He only knows that, being one  
By which a lady's hair is "done,"  
Thou art all mystery.

But, lowly though thy present state,  
Thou hast for memory this great  
And deathless blessing,  
That thou—oh joy beyond eclipse!—  
Didst lie between a maiden's lips  
When she was dressing.

DUM-DUM.



### LA BELLE ALLIANCE.

(After Maclise's picture of the Meeting of Wellington and Blücher.)

FIELD-MARSHAL ASQUITH. "CAPITAL BATTLE WE WON A FEW WEEKS AGO."

FIELD-MARSHAL REDMOND. "YES. HADN'T WE BETTER BE PHOTOGRAPHED TOGETHER LIKE THIS—IN CASE ANYTHING HAPPENS?"





THE PARLIAMENTARY BALLERINE TRIP SMARTLY FORWARD TO THE FOOTLIGHTS AGAIN.

(The Artist was so overwhelmed by the charms of the first few who presented themselves that he has had to omit six hundred and sixty odd *coryphées* of hardly less attractive mien.)

#### ARGUMENTUM AD HOMINEM.

[An American Counsel, in the course of a case of alleged poisoning, has swallowed in a cocktail a dose of arsenic of the same strength as that alleged to have been employed by the prisoner, in order to demonstrate its harmlessness. Foreseeing many developments of such action in the future, *Mr. Punch* makes no apology for printing the following forecast of a newspaper article of 1926.]

It is with great regret that we record the sad loss which newspaper readers and all frequenters of law courts have sustained by the untimely decease of Sir Robert Riskett, the eminent King's Counsel. It was known that Sir Robert had been suffering from ptomaine poisoning ever since the Great Marine Stores Case, in which he ate three blown tins of salmon in open court in proof of his client's contention that they were quite wholesome. He was believed, however, to be making his usual good recovery, and the news this morning will come as a shock upon a public accustomed to regard him as the ablest exponent of spectacular advocacy. From the day, a dozen years ago, when he shot the instructing solicitor in the leg with a pocket pistol in sup-

port of the theory of the prosecution in the Great Railway Mystery, his career has been one long series of dramatic triumphs.

It was, of course, unavoidable that such a man, in the course of such a career, should make occasional enemies. We believe the solicitor just mentioned—in spite of the fact that the case he had presented was definitely established by Sir Robert's *coup*—could never be induced either to brief him again or even to sit in the same court; and it is an open secret that a certain law officer of the Crown never forgave him for the blow on the point of the jaw with which, in the trial arising out of the Club Prize-fight Scandal, Sir Robert dissipated in a moment his wordy sophistries upon the inefficacy of the "knockout."

But, putting aside criticism arising from merely personal or petty feeling, we are of opinion ourselves that there is something to be said on public grounds against the strenuous advocacy now so much in vogue. For one thing, it cannot be maintained at this high pitch without ultimate damage to the

personnel of the judicial Bench. Much though we admired at the time the devotion to duty of the talented K.C. who a year ago allowed himself to be trepanned in the well of the court by the medical client whose skill had been slanderously impugned, yet we cannot shut our eyes to a possible connection between that operation and the reversal on appeal of nine out of ten of his judgments since his elevation to the Bench.

We will not, however, dwell upon this aspect of the subject, for there are obvious compensations. Judges who have been previously, during years of advocacy, broken upon the wheel of their clients' necessities, may not prove capable of sustained attention or connected thought, but their histrionic ability abides. In proof of this we need only cite Mr. Justice Leary's display in the Hypnotic Pocket-picking case last summer, when he himself went off into a trance during his summing-up, and was found, after restoration to consciousness by a doctor and the leader of the Circuit, to have the watches of both in his possession.

## THE CHILDREN'S PARTY.

SCENE—A large library. TIME—2.45 P.M. Most of the usual furniture has been removed, and the body of the room is filled with rows of chairs. At the end of the room, and facing the chairs, a little platform has been erected. He and She are inspecting the arrangements.

She. Come, Charles, you must admit that the servants have done wonders. Parkins and William have worked like Trojans, the maids have surpassed themselves, and the gardeners—

He. Yes, I heard them. You can't mistake a gardener's step when he does get into a house. You might just as well let a traction-engine in at the front-door. But oughtn't you to have a gangway down the middle?

She. Oh, it's only for children. They won't mind about gangways. Besides, we've only just got chairs enough for them all as it is.

He. What are you going to do with the mothers and nurses?

She. They'll be in the back rows.

He. But if their children refuse to be separated from them?

She. Then they'll have to go into the back rows, too. Any more difficulties?

He. Well, personally, I think it would have been better to have the platform at the other end. It's not too late to make the change. Let's—

She. What? Move every chair round? You must be mad.

He. Oh, never mind. But if you didn't want suggestions you shouldn't have asked for them.

She. I don't call that a suggestion. I call it lunacy. Besides, I didn't ask for any.

He. Well, I won't press it. What's the ventriloquist's name?

She. I don't know. They only said they'd send one of their best men.

He. When's he coming?

She. He ought to be here now. William's gone to the station to meet him and bring him along. There he is at the front-door. Just you dash out and meet him, and help him in with his dummy figures.

[He goes out. She shifts a chair or two and puts in some final touches.]

He (re-entering with a stranger dressed in a frock-coat suit, high collar and black tie). This is Professor Borradaile, my dear. Professor, let me introduce you to my wife.

She. It's very good of you, Professor, to come down and help us to amuse our little ones.

The Professor (to himself. We put his thoughts into words). Little ones! What on earth—? Oh, it's a joke. (Aloud) Yes, indeed. Little in knowledge. But we shall improve in time, no doubt; everything must have a beginning, and then it spreads.

She (to herself). What a funny ventriloquist! (Aloud) That depends on the voice, of course.

The Professor (to himself). She's mad. (Aloud) No doubt the voice has something to do with it.

He. Have you brought your figures, Professor?

The Professor. Of course, of course. I always bring them.

He. Can I fetch them in for you?

The Professor (to himself). He's mad too. (Aloud) Oh, pray don't trouble. I always carry them in my head.

He and She (to themselves). He's mad.

He (to the Professor). Ha, ha, that's capital. The new ventriloquism, I suppose.

The Professor. Oh dear, no. Merely a matter of memory. Memory can be trained like everything else.

She. Oh, no doubt, no doubt. I am sure it will all be most interesting and amusing.

The Professor. Amusement is not considered to be our chief object; but we do try to amuse while we instruct, and generally we find we succeed wonderfully well.

She. Ah, here comes the audience. I must help to get them seated.

[The audience, consisting of children ranging in age from 4 to 12, all dressed in their best and bringing with them a sprinkling of mothers and nurses, begins to troop in. The seats are gradually filled. The Professor takes his stand on the platform and, silence having been established, he begins to speak.]

The Professor. I have to thank you for inviting me to come amongst you this afternoon. I own that this is the first occasion on which I have had the privilege of addressing an audience so largely composed of the young of both sexes. However, in such a matter as this it is impossible to begin too early. Knowledge acquired in the impressionable years of youth remains firmly implanted throughout life, and I therefore welcome joyfully the chance of sowing seed which will in due time grow into a beneficent and plentiful harvest of wisdom. The subject of my discourse is, as you all know, "Domestic Hygiene." [A small child here begins to cry and is hastily removed.] "Domestic" is, as you are aware, derived from *domus*, a Latin word meaning house, and "domestic" therefore means of or belonging to a house. "Hygiene" is from the Greek word for health, and "Domestic Hygiene" may therefore be described as the science of health in relation to the household arrangements amid which our lives are passed.

[The Professor proceeds in this fashion for nearly an hour, and ends with an impassioned appeal to his hearers to enrol themselves as members of the Domestic Hygiene Central Association.]

\* \* \* \* \*

Extract from "The Chorsleydale Standard" of the following Saturday:—

"The Lowmead Village Hall on Wednesday last was filled with an enthusiastic meeting of members of the Lowmead Scientific Association, who had gathered for one of the series of scientific afternoons which have formed such an outstanding feature of the proceedings of this body. Unfortunately Professor Borradaile, who was to have lectured on Domestic Hygiene, was unable to be present, but his place was supplied practically at a moment's notice by Lieutenant Dobbs with his well-known and refined scientific Ventriloquial Entertainment. The members are to be congratulated on having provided for themselves and the rest of the audience a most enjoyable afternoon. The Lieutenant was heartily applauded throughout, and we hope shortly to see him again in Lowmead."

The extent to which the twentieth-century boy is expected to look after his parents may not be realised by some; but two extracts (one from a notice of Long Leave at Eton and the other from *The Acton Gazette*) may serve to show the tendency of the modern movement:

"Long Leave will be granted to Parents or Guardians of all boys who apply for it."

"Two schoolboys, aged respectively seven and thirteen, were charged with being found wandering at Acton-lane, Acton, and having a parent who did not exercise proper guardianship over them."

"The Chairman stated that before they went into voting for a president he should like to say there was no one who could appreciate the honour the society had done to him by re-electing him to the presidency in succession, as they had done as much as he had."—*Rugby Advertiser*.

The punctuator of this speech is determined to show that the duties of the president are merely nominal.



Hostess. "WILL YOU HAVE SOME BREAD-AND-BUTTER, DARLING?"

Small Boy. "BREAD-AND-BUTTER! I THOUGHT THIS WAS A PARTY!"

## THE SWANKERS AGAIN.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY VERSION.

I. SCENE—Any Girls' School.

First Girl. Where've you been?

Second Girl. London, most of the time.

F. G. Been to any theatres?

S. G. Heaps. Almost every night, except when there were parties.

F. G. What did you like best?

S. G. Oh, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. Simply ripping. I adore FRED TERRY. Did you see it?

F. G. Yes; but I like *Count Hannibal* best.

S. G. Did you go to *Peter Pan* again?

F. G. Rather: six times. Isn't it topping?

S. G. Topping. But I missed the old *Wendy* horribly, and there's a new *Captain Hook*, too.

F. G. And *The Blue Bird*—did you see that?

S. G. Yes—twice. Isn't *The Joy of Being Thoroughly Naughty* a pet?

F. G. Oh, isn't he? The darling!

S. G. The duck! Hullo, there's Beryl! Beryl, did you go to many parties?

Beryl. Millions.

F. G. Were they good?

B. Absolutely ripping.

F. G. Did you go to the Jacksons'?

B. Of course. Why didn't you?

F. G. I had a cold.

B. What a pity. It was miles the best. They had a cotillon. I got a pair of opera glasses. It was lovely.

S. G. I say, what do you think? I learnt to smoke. Uncle Guy taught me. Isn't it ripping?

B. Didn't it make you ill?

S. G. Of course not. It's as easy as anything when you know how. I knew how directly.

[And so forth.]

II. SCENE—Any Boys' School.

First Boy. Where've you been?

Second Boy. St. Moritz.

F. B. We were at Montana. Top-hole, but too many headmasters. Are you good at ski-ing?

S. B. Rather! But bob-sleighing is what I like best. Our crowd simply flew.

F. B. Did you win anything?

S. B. No; we were screaming favourites, but a mouldy dog got in the way and just spoilt everything. We beat the record up to then, though.

F. B. How fast?

S. B. Oh! nearly seventy miles an hour, the judge said.

F. B. I had a ripping toboggan.

S. B. Luge, you mean.

F. B. Yes, luge if you like; same thing.

S. B. Was anyone killed at your place?

F. B. No, no one actually killed, but plenty of accidents. One girl broke both her legs.

S. B. We had a man killed outright—only a Swiss, though. Have many dances at Montana?

F. B. Heaps and heaps. Jolly girls there too. I say, don't tell any one, will you? Swear you won't. Well, I'm engaged.

S. B. Oh, rubbish! You're not.

F. B. Yes, I am. She's the best skater there. We're going to live in snowy countries all our lives—go from one to the other for skiing and all that.

S. B. Oh, skittles! Don't be such an idiot. You're only fourteen.

F. B. Well, some boys of fourteen are grown up. She's willing to wait, anyway.

S. B. How old's she?

F. B. She's younger than I am, as a wife ought to be. She's twelve.

S. B. Have any fun in London?

F. B. Not much—Switzerland was best. Did you?

S. B. Not bad. But I'm sick of conjurers, and they had them everywhere. Why don't conjurers learn something new? I knew how everything was done.

[And so on.]

## AT THE PLAY.

## "PRESERVING MR. PANMURE."

WE were warned to be in our seats punctually, as the interest threatened to begin practically at the same time as the play did. This was misleading, for one might easily have evaded the First Act and lost little by it except the irresistible peltantry of little Miss IRIS HAWKINS. A short synopsis would have put us in touch with the facts. Thus: *Mr. Panmure*, a gentleman of rather dotty physique (the result of early excesses), having ostensibly reformed through the ministrations of a pious wife and clergyman, and got into the habit of delivering discourses at family prayers twice a week, still retains some irrepressible relics of the old Adam. These break out, and in a moment of amorous gallantry he violently kisses the pretty governess of his daughter.

To the exordium here epitomised—of which the humour may be judged from the fact that it secured one of its most poignant effects by means of a dollop of powder smudged across the child's nose, which had suffered from the weather—two brilliant Acts succeeded. Wind is got of the outrage done to the governess, but the identity of the delinquent remains in doubt. A great and glorious quest is set on foot by the ladies. For a moment, when I saw a spasm of suspicion cross the devout face of *Mrs. Panmure*, I feared that *Sir ARTHUR PINERO* was going to break through that tradition of detective stories which requires that the actual culprit should be the last person to be suspected. However, it passes, and the innocence of *Mr. Panmure*, stoutly asserted by the injured party, is eventually confirmed to the satisfaction of the ladies by a little man staying in the house—the most unlikely of Lotharios—who, at the girl's request, takes upon himself the guilt, and receives from *Mrs. Panmure*, as the guerdon of his honesty and courage in confessing, the badge of the Order of Fine Souls (First Class).

The scene now shifts, for the last Act, to the house of a *Mr. Stulkeley, M.P.*, who had been a guest of the *Panmures* in the preceding Acts, and had offered hospitality to the governess in her predicament. Here we get right away from *Mr. Panmure*, except that he is briefly dragged in with a family crowd that we may hear of his ultimate confession, and that the author may have an opportunity of showing that he has not absolutely mislaid the title of his play. (Incidentally it transpires that the confession was wrung from *Panmure* by the revelations of a footman who over-

heard the smashing of a plate during the stormy interview which followed the Kiss, and subsequently found his master engaged in retrieving the fragments. Unfortunately, when I assisted at the second performance, the plate bounded along the floor intact.)

The interest now centres in a competition for the hand of the governess, as between *Mr. Stulkeley* and his Private Secretary, the little man who had assumed the guilt of the outrage. This Act contained some fairly good fun of its own, but had obvious difficulty in dragging out its slow length. Its failure was not the common one of last Acts—the failure of an author to maintain interest when clearing up the threads



Miss IRIS HAWKINS (*Myrtle*). "The programme tells you where my Mamma and my governess go to get their costumes; but Heaven and Pinero only know why I'm dressed like this."

that have been already unravelled. Its fault lay (apart from its undue expansion) in the attempt to establish interest at that late hour in a side issue.

*Sir WING* describes his work as "a Comic Play," and I bow to his authority. But he might well have called it a Farce, for some of his characters were sufficiently incredible. I am not sure that I quite believed in *Mr. Panmure*, that amalgam of irreconcilable elements; and I know I never believed in the loud crudity of his sister-in-law, or in the familiarity of *Woodhouse*, the M.P.'s Private Secretary. I have had the privilege, beyond my deserts, of acquaintance with many Parliamentary Private Secretaries, but I have never known one who was on

terms of such contemptuous intimacy with his chief. Of course, in the case of cousins it may be different, but it can't be so different as all that.

MISS MARIE LÖHR, as the governess, bore the brunt of the work, and did it with great intelligence and versatility. I was sorry that she was made gratuitously to appear in a scratch costume, minus gown and stockings, because it looks as if this kind of episode, coming so soon after her pyjamas scene in *Tantalising Tommy*, might grow into a habit with the people who write for her or manage her. I was sorry, too, that in the end she should have had to choose, for a husband, between a puppet and a prig, for in this latter category I must reluctantly place *Mr. Stulkeley, M.P.*, who carried his platform manner into the domestic circle. For the sake of the human interest, such as it was, the author might well have allowed him, in the act of proposing marriage, to throw off his oratorical style and behave less like a gramophone on stilts. There are some things that are not fair in love or war, and elocution is one of them. *MR. DAWSON MILLWARD*, in this not very grateful rôle, was, as always, an admirable figure, though perhaps he marched and countermarched about the stage a little too much and too rapidly.

*MR. ARTHUR PLAYFAIR*, as *Panmure*, did not commit the mistake which he made in *Vice Versa*, but showed excellent restraint when tempted to conduct himself farcically. Miss LILIAN BRAITHWAITE was a very perfect *Mrs. Panmure*, and *MR. DION BOUCICAULT* took advantage of his many chances, though his methods were sometimes a little irritating.

Regrettably the chief attraction of this rather unequal play disappeared quite early when the precocious *Myrtle* was despatched to bed. I venture to join in her protest at this premature dismissal. It is true that she had nothing to do with the play except to afford the governess a reason for existence, and could not conceivably have been the child of either of her parents. But this only helped her to be a thing apart and wonderful. I never saw anything to compare with Miss IRIS HAWKINS for sheer aplomb, and I only wish she could have been there all the time. O. S.

"One of these men, a Calabrian named Motta, went to his partner's shop and tried to shoot him while he was engaged in shaving a customer. The bullet shaved the face of a boy who was waiting."—*Egyptian Gazette*.

And very likely the lad had only dropped in for a hair-cut.



## A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.

*Visitor.* "I WONDER HOW YOU MANAGE TO HUNT AT ALL WITH SO MUCH WIRE."

*Resident.* "ONLY THING THAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE, MY BOY! WOULD NEVER HAVE AN EXCUSE TO TURN AWAY FROM ANYTHING WITHOUT IT."

## TO THE MODERN QUACK.

[After reading the early history of medicine.]

YE makers of fortunes gigantic,  
Quack vendors of potions and pills,  
Who now give us nothing romantic  
Except your advertisement bills,  
Consider the wondrous concoctions  
Put up in the bottle or box  
By doctors aforesaid and, wasting no  
more time,  
Just pull up your socks.

"Digestion," they'd ask, "misbehaving?"  
Or, "Blisters on both of your heels?"  
Tut, tut! Take an ivory shaving  
Thrice daily, an hour before meals."  
Such sorts of medicinal dainties,  
Backed up by a ponderous mien,  
They'd foist upon folly as certain of  
jolly  
Well curing the spleen.

They'd (almost) put up in a flagon  
And afterward offer for sale  
Pink hairs from the head of a dragon,  
Blue tufts from a unicorn's tail.  
And, could they have only got at them,  
No doubt they'd have mixed with  
their drinks

For troublesome tummies the wrappings  
of mummies,  
Or chips off the Sphinx.

But *you*, did we ask that a pimple  
Be cured with a Balsam of Bats,  
Would only look hopelessly simple,  
Or rudely ejaculate, "Rats."  
Come, give up your commonplace  
nostrums,  
Present something quaint to our  
view;  
Those picturesque liars could always  
find buyers,  
So why shouldn't you?

"The above is a facsimile of a cheque en-  
closed with every 2/9 bottle of —, and £10  
reward will be paid if the cheque is not as good  
as gold at said bank for 2/6."—*Advertisement.*  
If it is as good as silver it will be good  
enough for us.

"The birds were somewhat wild, but all  
thoroughly enjoyed the sport."  
*The Englishman.*

We'll hope they did, anyway. We  
know the fox enjoys it, so why  
shouldn't the birds?

## THE FATAL DRAWBACK.

[Pantomime in its present form is of quite  
recent origin.]

ONCE, if I read in story books  
Of mediæval deeds of daring,  
And how the baron said "Gadzooks,"  
Instead of "Dash it all," when  
swearing,  
I prated of the "good old" times,  
But now their goodness is forgotten,  
Since life bereft of pantomimes  
Would be, to put it mildly, rotten.  
If matters happened to annoy,  
The baron could not soothe his  
"paddy"

By harking while some leading boy  
Burst loudly into "Yip-i-addy!"  
He could not feel a moistening eye  
As someone (on a princely salary)  
Warbled a strain repeated by  
The fireman's infant in the gallery.

Not his our laughter loud and free  
At clowns who give policemen toko;  
It was not even his to see  
The humour of the ruby boko;  
Some motley fool his ease beguiled,  
Punning with tedious persistence,  
A thought that makes me reconciled  
To twentieth-century existence.

## OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

*Simpkins*, the agent, was not popular in Ballymoy, and the question was how to get rid of him. The Rev. J. J. *Meldon's* idea was to marry him to *Mrs. Lorimer*. *Mrs. Lorimer* had just been acquitted on a charge of murdering her husband, the general feeling being that she was lucky to get off. In the *Miss King* who had taken Ballymoy House, *Meldon* thought that he recognised *Mrs. Lorimer*; if he could only induce *Simpkins* to marry her, there was a chance that she might murder *Simpkins* too. As a casual suggestion, thrown off after dinner, the joke would be well enough; as the basis of a novel—even of a wild farce by GEORGE A. BIRMINGHAM—it does not bear emphasis. *The Simpkins Plot* (NELSON) is written for the most part in dialogue—or rather in monologue by *Meldon*, with occasional interruptions from other characters. A sufficiently humorous *Meldon* might have carried the book to success; Mr. BIRMINGHAM has tried his hardest to make him sufficiently humorous, but he has only succeeded in making him a bore. How the other characters stood him I cannot imagine; if I had lived in Ballymoy there would have been a "Meldon Plot." I am sorry to say this, remembering the delight which a previous book of Mr. BIRMINGHAM'S gave me, but I am afraid that he is trying to force the irresponsible note, and it is the duty of every lover of irresponsibility to give him a word of warning.

No, Mr. MASEFIELD, I refuse to be put upon. When a man starts a story with a mingled flavour of *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*, steers us to the Spanish Main, and then goes on to introduce Indians, and the gold of Incas concealed in a desolate and mysterious temple, that man has got to make his hero lift the treasure before the end of the book, or I shall get my machete into his ribs. Of course you will answer that your story is entitled *Lost Endeavour*, and that I must have known what to expect from the beginning. To that I can only reply that it makes no difference, it's not cricket (or even pelota), and that the name of your publisher is NELSON, who obviously ought to have known better. He ought to have said, "Now, Mr. MASEFIELD, you have a wonderfully fertile imagination, and you know everything there is to be known about sailing sloops and chopping a path through unexplored forests; also you have given us some very pretty characters here, notably *Dick*, the smuggler, and *Mr. Theodore Mora*, the Spanish schoolmaster who was destined to be a god. Why should you leave us with this unsatisfactory ending? It's

sheer perversity, that's what it is. Kindly do that last chapter over again, and bring back the ingots slung over your shoulder in a sack this time, and we might call the book *Success*, or something of that sort."

When you begin to read *Lady Fanny* (METHUEN) the chances are that you will consider it a very ordinary society novel, a little more obviously feminine perhaps than most, about a young wife who goes to Switzerland for a "rest-cure" from a boring existence in the Shires, and is there fallen in love with by two men, one of whom knows, and the other does not know, that she is already married. This, certainly, is the bare outline of the tale; but by the time that Mrs. GEORGE NORMAN has got fairly into her stride, and you have been made acquainted with the *Brabazon* party at Lucerne, the conv ction will probably dawn upon you that you are in for a usual story written with a quite unusual degree of skill. Later, when *Lady Fanny* has fled to Volpera, and the affair of *Prince Maurice*

has developed itself, you will begin (I hope) to feel some of the pleasure which I myself have just experienced. This story of the love of two persons, hopelessly parted by circumstance, is really beautiful. It is told with delicacy and restraint, and a kind of tender humour that adds enormously to its effect. I have seldom read anything more moving in their own kind than the final chapters; the rush of them, indeed, carried me off my feet, and I have reason to suspect that Mrs. NOR-



MRS. STUBBINS, FROM THE COUNTRY, THINKS FOLK IN LONDON "UNCOMMON SOCIABLE."

MAN may have been as strongly moved in writing them, because (though I hate, rather, to mention it) there were certainly two instances in which her grammar would not bear the cold light of reflection. But this, after all, is no great matter. Syntax is of less value than sincerity; and for this virtue above all others do I subscribe myself the author's most appreciative and grateful debtor.

## The Odd Job Man.

Beneath a drawing in *The Illustrated London News*, illustrative of aboriginal rites in Australia, these words appear:

"Only men are present and there may be as many as fifty of them, all with white streaks painted on their bodies. (Drawn by our special artist.)"

No doubt he makes quite a nice little addition to his income in this way.

"As a steamer was discharging her cargo at the Quay Ernest Renaud, Nantes, the quay began to move and slipped bodily into the river, with a large crane, piles of merchandise, and a wagon. The foundations of the quay are thought to have been faulty."—*Daily Mail*.

Surely not.